And I am preſt vnto it, therefore ſpeake.

Baſſ. In *Belmont* is a Lady richly left,
And ſhe is faire, and fairer then that word,
Of wondrous vertues. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receiue faire ſpeechleſſe meſſages:
Her name is *Portia*; nothing vnder-valew'd
To *Catos* daughter, *Brutus Portia*.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the foure winds blow in from euery coaſt
Renowned ſutors, and her ſunny lockes
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,
which makes her ſeat of *Belmont*, *Colchos* ſtrond,
And many *Iaſons* comes in queſt of her.
O my *Anthonio*, had I but the meanes
To hold a riuall place with one of them,
I haue a minde preſages me ſuch thrift,
That I ſhould queſtionleſſe be fortunate.

Ant. Thou knowſt that all my fortunes are at ſea,
Neither haue I money, nor commodity,
To raiſe a preſent ſumme. Therefore go forth,
Try what my credit can in Venice do,
That ſhall be rackt euen to the vttermoſt,
To furniſh thee to *Belmont* to faire *Portia*.
Go preſently enquire, and ſo will I
where money is, and I no queſtion make,
To haue it of my truſt, or for my ſake. *Exeunt*

Enter Portia with her waiting Woman Nerriſſa.

Portia. By my troth *Nerriſſa*, my little body is a wearie of this great world.

Ner. You would be ſweet Madam, if your miſeries were in the ſame abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet for ought I ſee, they are as ſick that ſurfet with too much, as they that ſtarue with nothing; it is no meane happineſſe therefore to be ſeated in the meane, ſuperfluity comes ſooner by white haires, but competency liues longer.

Por.

Portia. Good

Ner. They wo

Por. If to do
do, Chappels ha
Princes Pallaces
ſtructions: I ca
done, then to be
ing: the braine n
per leapes ore a c
to skip ore the n
reaſoning is not
the word chooſe
who I diſlike, fo
will of a dead fat
one, nor refuſe n

Ner. Your fat
death haue good
deuiſed in theſe
who chooſes his
be choſen by any
what warmth is
Princely ſuters t

Por. I prethee
will deſcribe the
my affection.

Ner. Firſt, the

Por. I that's a
his horſe, and he
good parts, that
dy his Mother pl

Ner. Then th

Por. He doth
will not haue me
I feare he will pr
old, being ſo full
ther be married

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *Merchant of Venice* (STC 22297) LONDON, 1600 [1619] THE BRITIS